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MEMORIAL

OF

GEN. JEREMIAH JOHNSON

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Jeremiah Johnson

A MEMORIAL DISCOURSE

ON

The Life, Character and Services

OF

GENERAL JEREMIAH JOHNSON,

OF BROOKLYN,

The First President of the St. Nicholas Society of Nassau Island,

BY

SAMUEL ROOSEVELT JOHNSON, D. D.

A CHAPLAIN OF THE SOCIETY.

Delivered before the Society in Brooklyn, October 20, 1853.

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St. Nicholas Society of Nassau Island.

At a Special Meeting of the St. Nicholas Society of Nassau Island, held at the City Hall, in the City of Brooklyn, on the 22d day of October, 1852, the Hon. JOHN A. LOTT, 1st Vice President in the Chair. The Chairman announced the death of GENERAL JEREMIAH JOHNSON, the late President of the Society, in suitable remarks.

On motion, Resolved, That a Committee be appointed by the Chair to draft resolutions, expressive of the sense of the Society, on the event of the decease of their venerable President.

The Chair appointed Hon. JOHN VANDERBILT, Hon. G. L. MARTENSE and Hon. SAMUEL SMITH, as such Committee.

The Committee, by the Chairman, Report the following Preamble and Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, it has pleased the Wise Ruler of all things to remove from us the venerable President of this Society, who has endeared himself to us by his uniform kindness and goodness; in whose pure and upright life an example has been left us to imitate; and who, in the discharge of all his varied duties was ever vigilant, faithful and true—

Therefore be it Resolved, That in the death of the venerable President of this Society, we, as a Society not only, but as individuals, and as members of this community, have cause to mourn; and while we regret the loss, we have reason to admire the worth, the integrity, the honesty of purpose, the purity of heart and uprightness of life, of one who, in ripe old age, has been removed by the hand of death.

Resolved, That we deeply sympathize with the family of the deceased in this dispensation of Divine Providence. But while they mourn, may they be consoled that their venerable parent had in all things well performed his part in the "great drama of life;" that he was well prepared to enter upon the glorious realities of eternity; and that he has left a name to be revered, and an example worthy to be followed by his children, and by all who may live after him.

Resolved, That we will wear the usual badge of mourning, and as a Society attend his funeral this day in a body.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of the deceased, as indicating our respect for his memory, and that they be published.

Whereupon the meeting adjourned to attend the funeral.

At the next regular meeting of the Society, on the 6th December, 1852, a Committee was appointed to procure the delivery of an Address before the Members upon the Life, Character, and Services of our late lamented President.

so as to bring up his image distinct and life-like as you knew him and have seen him, it were well to have grown up by his side, and have been with him in his daily walks, familiar with his home, and with his ancestral lands where he was born and lived and died; to be imbued with his own traditional lore, have naturally known his ways, manner and habits; have had his sayings and anecdotes as part and parcel of the memory; his admirable character and life as a man, a soldier, a citizen, a christian, thoroughly known by unstudied observation; and all the localities, incidents, transactions and inhabitants of our beautiful Island to have been, as they were to him, even as household things; and withal to possess his quick perception, his ready memory, and his business talent; to be in fine as his embodied self. Your speaker can but give you a retired student's words, not over familiar with localities and circumstances, nor well disciplined for the business of life's transactions,—but he approaches his theme with reverential thought, and with a heart of love; and in one instance I can surpass his very self, or relatives most near, for their modest mind would have shaded his excellencies too much, and I can speak of them more freely, and so all the more truly. And in coming this night before the presence of

our Society to speak of our departed friend, I have much added cause of homefelt interest, for I find myself here associated with his most esteemed Pastor,* well known to me in my youthful days as a student of renown, even then distinguished for eloquent discourse, just leaving Columbia College as I entered, but moving in its precincts for some time after as President of the Peithologian Society, of which I am a loyal member. And I call to mind, with much emotion, that my own father, the Rev. John Barent Johnson, was in the years 1802-3, like him, the Pastor of the honored subject of our discourse, and of the congregation with which he was all his long life connected.

And lo! here I am, speaking in this imposing and beautiful structure, sacred to the Redeemer's name, where one,†—long my school and college mate, a friend of youth—tells his people of a Saviour's love and work. Well do I remember how, forty years ago, he used to bring me over to his father's dwelling, then very far out of town, out beyond the Green Hill, and the Nurseries and the big Scup, and the old City Prison; and to lead me to his mother's mother, the sainted Isabella Graham, who would take by the hand the little boy,

* The Rev. Maurice W. Dwight, D. D.
† The Rev. George W. Bethune, D. D.

the child of her favorite pupil, and speak a few plain words of kindness and religion. Years have passed over us since then, though we have as yet felt time's wing but lightly: the currents of life have separated us, so that we seldom meet; yet I ween to old affection, such re-union is delightful, and it furnishes additional reason to me for thanking him for the privilege which his courtesy has offered, while we thus unite in doing honor to the memory of one so honored and beloved. But to my special work—

Preliminary to the personal history, there are certain facts relating to the blood, family, and estate of our late President, too interesting to be omitted.

The historians of Long Island unite in the account that the families of the Wallabout were mainly of Walloon blood, the blood of France, and that the name Waalbogt means "The Walloon's Cove," and it might seem that the Johnson family is thus descended. Some of the Walloons lived in France, on its borders; most of them, however, inhabited the Belgic provinces; they spoke the *old* French. Many of the inhabitants were Protestants, and in the persecutions of Spain and France, they emigrated by thousands into Holland, which, like our own country, freely

welcomed strangers and the oppressed. They were distinguished for industry, bravery, artizan skill and agricultural efficiency. In 1623, in the ship New Netherland, a company of thirty families embarked from Holland for the colony in America, most of which were Walloon; they settled throughout the country—some going to Hartford, some to Albany, and others to the Wallabout. Now this may strike some faithful members of our Association with surprise and some with disappointment; for we are very far from being prepared to give up our Holland claim upon the person and blood of our distinguished President; nor are we of his blood prepared to forego our birth-right claim to all the pure honors of Holland ancestry. Nor need we, nor should we in either case. No true son of St. Nicholas will abate his tenacious hold in such a business. For look at the history of the Walloons: even in their own home, they were of mingled blood and that well mingled with the Netherland. The emigrants fled to Holland, sometimes, it would seem, designating their settlement by their name; there numerously intermarrying, so that their blood became more blended with the native; thence some of their families emigrated over the wide ocean to cast their lot within our Holland Colony. Since that time, 200

years and more have passed away, each generation for a time increasing largely the proportion of the pure Holland blood; the French growing "beautifully less," till it is left, not forming the great substantial element of the man's nature, but being the spice as it were, giving some fine flavor to the whole, leaving only a minute but happy element of cheerfulness, vivacity and enterprising spirit, which improves the solid strength and resolution of character that marks the Hollander. Thus we see our Tiebout, our Rapelyea, our Debevoise, manifesting our national traits, with unmistaken certainty. Like the knife of the Indian Chief, of which he boasted that the very identical knife had been handed down through several generations, twice having had a new blade, and once a new handle:—so, and in no other sense do we admit the Gallic claim. Besides, some historians* insist that the JOHNSON blood in question is directly of Holland, however incidentally mingled with Walloon; and that close alliances and changes of name,—the patronymic or stock name being dropped among the colonists with remarkable facility,—and transfers and bequests of property have obscured the true relationship. The honor of being the colonial ancestor of

* See Annals of Newtown, by JAMES RIKER, Jr., p. 268.

General Johnson, direct in the male line, is thus asserted for Jan Barentsen Van Driest, from Zutphen in Guilderland, in 1657; and if so, his very name and home are enough to satisfy the most incredulous.

It is surprising to see how often the Johnson name occurs in the early history of the Colony; very frequently as the regular surname, and to an inconceivable extent as the middle name; nor are we to think that a name so very common in a Holland colony, could have been foreign to Holland, or could designate a foreign blood. As the name of John is claimed by Christendom, so the son of John is found in every land. Among the Jansens or Johnsons of the Colony (the names are identical,) you will meet with Roelof Jansen, whose estate below Warren street, belongs now to Trinity Church; with Andries Jansen, the first schoolmaster of Beveryck, now Albany; with Symon Jansen, a commissioner to examine accounts; with Joris, Willem, Pieter, Stoffel, Auwke, Theunis, Rem, Isaac, Nettert, Caspeer, Carson, Aris, Jeremiah Johnson. It was a Jansen who gallantly went out on horseback to attempt the rescue of the French Jesuits, prisoners among the savage Mohawks; it was at the house of Jacob

Jansen Stol,* that the people of Esopus, having no church, were assembled in 1658 to keep Ascension Day. A Barent Jansen is marked as early as 1687 in the City of New York, and as a *native* in the Colony. A Barent Jansen, in 1690, with his son Barnt, was killed at the burning of Schenectady. It was at first written Barnt, with but one vowel; and thus some would write it out, Barnet, like the family of General Johnson; or Barent, like his kindred of my own family, on the old farm in Brooklyn, near the City Hall. So some still write the name Jansen, while others write it Johnson, the historic documents, and the family correspondence proving beyond dispute or doubt identity. Some of these rather peculiar names, as Teunis or Barnet for instance, may naturally guide us along the family line, especially when they are found residing in the same vicinity.

It is impossible, on an occasion like the present, to go minutely into the discussion of genealogies, especially where perplexities exist, and where the learned differ. But I will mention some interesting results. A banished Huguenot, Joris Jansen de Rapelje, son of Jeromus Jansen de Rapelje, came from Holland to New Netherlands, in 1623. He is

*Broadhead's Hist., p. 647.

said to be the first who tilled the earth in Brooklyn. To him was born in 1625, SARAH "the first-born Christian daughter in the province of New Netherlands;" the "first ascertained offspring," say the historians, "of European parentage" in this the Empire State. In honor of this, the Dutch authorities gave her a donation of land, 20 morgen, or 40 acres, at the Wallabout; and the Indians did, also, something of the same kind. Of this history there is no doubt, though some question has been raised as to the place of her nativity, Albany venturing to dispute the honor with Brooklyn. But the latest and most elaborate of our historians, John Romeyn Brodhead has recorded it as his conclusion, "*here at the Waalboght*, in the month of June, 1625, was born SARAH RAPELJE;" the location of the grant indicates the same; the family tradition of the Johnsons and others of the vicinity, has ever been accordant; and in matters of this kind, a family event, or a marked locality, is preserved with vastly more fidelity and certainty by a neighborhood tradition, than by some individual's calculation based upon insufficient data. Now, from the family mansion of Gen. JEREMIAH JOHNSON, you look down upon this very property; and he, our First President, was descended from this first-born Christian daughter in our land. I have, myself, seen and handled, through

the courtesy of the sons of our lamented Patriarch, an old Deed, dated April 10, 1694, a stained, tattered, and venerable Document, written in the language of the fatherland, conveying to one of the family a portion of the paternal farm; he by another purchase in 1704, obtained the remainder; and his son, dying without issue, bequeathed the ancestral estate to his near relative, BARNET JOHNSON, whose son, JEREMIAH, was our own Founder, and his sons again, our honored fellow-members:— as one of my kindred exclaimed, "Good Dutch blood, and there's more of it left!"

Gen. JOHNSON added to his paternal estate other adjoining property, parts of which are now laid out in city lots. The homestead farm, soon necessarily to be covered by this vast extending city, continued while he lived as it was. It extends from the Hospital grounds on Kent avenue, on the West, to Williamsburg or Division avenue, on the East; from land of Jer. Remsen, deceased, near Hooper street, on the North, to land on the South, mostly bounded by Flushing avenue, and Walton street. These interesting points have detained me long. I pass now to the personal history.

Gen. JEREMIAH JOHNSON was born Jan. 23, 1766,

on the homestead farm. His father, BARNET JOHNSON, was born, April 2, 1740, married Sep. 8, 1764, ANNE REMSEN, of Newtown, and died Nov. 6, 1782. He was distinguished as a Patriot, and was an active advocate of the Revolutionary movement; and, as an officer of the Kings County Militia, encamped with them at Harlaem, in 1776. In 1777, he was taken prisoner by the British, and obtained his parole from Gen. Howe, through the interposition of a Masonic brother. In order to help on the cause to which he was devoted, he shrunk not from personal and pecuniary risks, but suggested loans from friends in his County to the American Government, and himself set the example by loaning first £700 and afterwards sums amounting to $5,000, all the security for which was a simple private receipt; given, too, in times of exceeding peril and discouragement—a noble and memorable deed.

When the Revolutionary war broke out JEREMIAH JOHNSON was in his eleventh year. What a boyhood must have been his, amidst those afflicting, exciting, and often terrible scenes! Yes! he was old enough to know all about the mustering of the forces, of the invasion of the enemy, of the catastrophe of the bloody and fatal battle near his very

home, of the imprisonment of his father, and of the capture of the city. Right before his eyes, in the Wallabout Bay, lay anchored the dreadful prison-ships, in which, during the war, eleven thousand, five hundred victims perished. He saw the bands of soldiers as they traversed the country, the array of ships of war, the moving of their armed boats upon the water—and his ears were familiar with the sounds of martial music and adventure, and his eyes with the signs of invasion and of conflict. He heard his father stigmatized as a rebel, and with his own eyes he saw English soldiers intruding on his home domain, and cutting down his finest trees remorselessly.

But that same boy lived to see another sight. In 1783, on the 25th of November, *he saw* the AMERICAN guard relieve the British; he saw British troops marching, for the last time, down Broadway to the Battery, and embarking in boats to their ships; he saw Gen. Washington and suite, at the head of American troops, marching down Pearl-street, to the Battery; he saw the British flag pulled down, and the first American flag hoisted and waving in the breeze. Those were stirring days, and must have made indelible impression upon his mind and character.

His father died before the Peace, and he was thrown the more upon himself; and though the distracted times were very unfavorable to regular education, he improved his opportunities as he was able; attended night schools; taught himself; and so self-made, his manly character was well-disciplined and developed.

Then, as a good, quiet citizen, he lived upon his farm in faithful industry; married his first wife, ABIGAIL, a daughter of Rem Remsen, in 1787, who died in her eighteenth year in 1788; his second wife, SARAH, a daughter of Tennis Rapilyea, in 1791; who died in her fifty-third year in 1825;—of ten children four are now living, two sons, BARNET and JEROMUS, and two daughters, SARAH ANNE, married to Nicholas Wyckoff, and SUSANNA, married to Lambert Wyckoff,—children who well sustain the paternal reputation, following in his steps of virtuous example, of benevolence and usefulness, patronizing the erection of churches and every worthy cause. His mother died on her birth-day, in 1792, aged 47 years. The old homestead was taken down and the fine substantial mansion, now occupied by the family, was erected near the same spot, in 1801. He, himself, exemplary in private life; exceedingly useful in social life; honored with the confi-

dence of all; favored with public trusts; with high offices, civil, military, social; crowning all with a remarkable kindness of spirit, and with Christian character and habits, passed nobly through all life's stages to its last.

The private and family life is hardly a suitable topic to enlarge upon, on an occasion like the present. I leave it in its own sacredness of simplicity, beauty, and affection, to the memories and hearts of those who understand it, and who will treasure it, oh how tenderly and reverentially, till life's latest hour!

But I *must dwell* awhile upon his more public career—his *official and military* history. Naturally of social turn, of benevolent impulses, and very public-spirited, at quite an early age he took an interest in whatever promised to promote the welfare of his native island; and, from his very character, position, and associations, he became early connected with public affairs. Of such offices as consisted with home residence, and interfered not with conducting its concerns efficiently, all were conferred upon him, which a grateful and confiding community could bestow. He was a Trustee of the Town of Brooklyn for 20 years, and Supervisor of the

same for 40 years, being for a long period the presiding officer of the Board of Supervisors. When Brooklyn was erected into a *village*, the residence of Gen. JOHNSON was left outside of the village bounds; and, of course, he could not, except by his own influence in a private capacity, which he ever largely exercised, participate in its public affairs; but in 1835, the CITY Charter was obtained, and the bounds were so extended as to include the Eighth and Ninth Wards; and thus his residence fell again within the lines. In 1837, he was elected Mayor of the City of Brooklyn, and re-elected in 1838 and 1839. He was elected a Member of the State Legislature, for the Session of 1809, and again, of 1810. In 1840, he was again elected to that important station, and again, in 1841. He was, at one time, Judge of the Common Pleas. At the time of his death he was President of the Woodhull Monument Association, and Chairman of the Board of Agriculture in the American Institute.

Amongst us, of the St. Nicholas Society, he stood recognised as our Founder, and our President. While he lived, we had no other. Besides all these, there was hardly an occasional or incidental duty in the business of agriculture, of education, of improvements, of reference, of management, to which

he was not summoned: as a striking instance of which I mention as illustrating his business capacity and experience, as well as the reputation and high confidence he maintained amidst the community; that a member of the bar informed me he could hardly go into any search of title in Brooklyn, without coming in contact with his name in all partitions of property in four cases out of five; which carried my own memory back vividly to the days in 1823, when I so well remember him with Leffert Lefferts and Jeremiah Lott, studying and arguing over the map of my father's ancestral farm, then in pasture, in grain, and in orchard, now built up and in the very heart of our great city, dividing it into three portions, for my sister, my brother, and myself.

General Johnson was naturally *a soldier*. He showed it in his manly countenance and martial bearing; and the life of his boyhood and youth must have nursed the patriot thought and the soldier spirit. During the war with Great Britain from 1812 to 1815, he was at first only a Junior Captain; but when one was solicited to go out in command on the Frontier, others declining, he volunteered for the dangerous duty; and so he took precedence by consent, and early became Colonel. Meanwhile he was very active in raising troops, and took great

interest in military affairs; and held himself ready at call. He was then honored with a Brigadier-General's commission, and was placed in command of the 22nd Brigade of Infantry, numbering 1750 men, and in view of a defence against an invasion, then almost daily expected, was ordered on Sept. 2, 1814, to Fort Greene, in Brooklyn, on which a fort and barracks were erected—a service on which, (as he wrote to his children) "I entered most willingly." There he remained in Camp for three months, when Peace was made between the mother country and our own, never again, I trust, to be interrupted. Whilst there he was conspicuous for his soldier-like ability; he proved himself an excellent disciplinarian; and he was a vast favorite with officers and privates, watching carefully over their rights and comforts, and most impartial in discipline, except that he was said to restrain and punish his special friends the soonest and the most. He was fortunate as well, for in that three months' time, no one of his soldiers died. After the Peace he was promoted to be a Major-General, an office which he held during his life, though not in actual command of a Division.

How Providence shapes the circumstances of human history! Had our gallant friend been brought

into the thick of memorable adventure, and stirring and momentous conflict, then had there been a JOHNSON in the field with his quick eye and masterly combinations, with his sagacity and great good sense; and his executive ability, noted for successful accomplishment in every field it moved in; with his warm heart and frank manners, and determined resolution, his soldiers devoted to his person to the death, who might have equalled the fame of our most conspicuous braves. The touch of his French blood would have carried him onward and forward; his Holland blood would have made him sure to maintain all the ground he gained with obstinacy immoveable. Like our great General Taylor, he would have but done his duty, and blushed to find it Fame. So circumstances make difference of event—but the man is all the same.

I must not omit the *Literary History* of the General, and some account of his manuscript remains, so far as I have had the opportunity to know of them, quite a large package having been placed within my hands by his family, which I have thoroughly explored. He was fond of putting down memoranda and scraps of history, and interesting facts which his observation and experience had gathered; though he did it in an incidental way,

rather like one meaning to gather them for farther arrangement, and as materials for a more labored attempt. Sometimes he did thus bring them into a more collected form, and write them out partially, for a Lecture before some Lyceum or Society, or for the use of some enquiring friend:—still even in the Lecture, often putting down but heads, leaving memory and speech to fill up the intervals. Thus we have reminiscences of Brooklyn, a discourse on the Revolutionary war, notes on the early settlement of Williamsburgh and Bushwick, and Long Island generally, and accounts of some of the old families of the land. He seems, also, to have been fond of taking up some religious or Biblical theme, of sacred history or truth, and writing down his thoughts. Sometimes, too, he ventured to indulge the dangerous luxury of courting the muse of Poesy, oftener in satiric and political than sentimental strain. Sometimes he is exploring the lines of townships, reporting upon records, searching into titles. One large volume contains all the orders given out by him as Brigadier General, and facts connected with his official military life. Sometimes there are translations from Erasmus, and other old authors. Well acquainted with the language of Holland, he was fond of making translations from its writers; and his excellent translation of Von der

Donk's History of New Netherlands, evincing his knowledge of the tongue of the Fatherland, is highly complimented by Thompson, in his History of Long Island. Indeed, there has not been an author meditating a work upon Long Island, or publishing one, who has not conferred with General Jeremiah Johnson, and treasured up his words; and who has not borrowed and used his communications and his notes, and made grateful mention of him and of his assistance. Thompson, Prime, Onderdonk, Strong, Riker, in their Histories, all do this; and generally give his personal history and eulogium. Some publish pages of his communications,—all have introduced his facts. Thus it has happened, that in one shape or another, these have been long since and repeatedly brought before the public, and form materials of our known and popular histories. Sometimes there is a communication on the finances of Brooklyn, sometimes upon its rights;—now an essay on the Fall of Nations, now some fragmentary folio leaves upon the Reformation in France. The last I will mention is a Draught of his Address before our St. Nicholas Society, which we so well remember, pronounced by him, so advanced in years, with such dignity of presence and with unexpected clearness and vigor. I will not leave this portion without the following brief ex-

tract from its page:—"We hail every person in whom Dutch blood is mingled and flows, as a descendant of the heroic race which contended for civil and religious liberty in Holland; we know they will be freemen in America."

The *Religious Character and Life* is the best possession of man; his richest treasure, his truest ornament, his real nobility, his strength and glory. And here our departed President stood forth an exemplary man; a modest, consistent, obedient, habitual, conforming Christian. A cheerful, hopeful, and confiding religiousness characterized him, united to an active spirit, ever ready to be serviceable. His faith in the great Redeemer, as the one Atoning Sacrifice for sin, and as the Lord our Righteousness, was unwavering, and was the chief element of his spiritual life. He belonged to the old Dutch Reformed Congregation in Brooklyn, of which the Rev. Maurice W. Dwight is now the Pastor. In that congregation, from boyhood to old age, he was a steadfast worshipper. For fifty years he was there a communicant. He was, we may say, a standing member of the Consistory, in and out, alternating, according to the parish method, continually. He was Clerk of the Consistory for forty years. On all business committees he was the

working member; and when church or parsonage was to be erected, his name is prominent among the building committees, in counsel or for accomplishment. There is also a religious tone in all his lectures and communications, which bespeaks the religious man. And the subject of his compositions is frequently a scriptural or religious one,—Notes on Genesis; Remarks on the Catechism, particularly on the Lord's Supper; the Republic of the Hebrews, &c.; showing his habitual interest in subjects kindred to his faith. Some of these communications are particularly affecting. One is "Advisory Remarks to my Children, when I took command in the war of 1812,"—when he knew not how soon he might fill a soldier's grave. Another is a Record of the charge given to him by his father, Barnet, an hour before his death, by him recorded, so he writes, "to transmit to his children and their posterity the desire of their worthy father, and to show with what zeal he desired to promote the glory of God; hoping that he may, with this precept, together with the example left them of his piety, inspire them (with the help of God,) with principles similar to those he possessed." The charge was this:—"My son, I am about departing this life, and earnestly desire that you pay strict attention to the religion I have taken care to instruct

you in, and that you in no wise forsake our Dutch Church; and further, that you obey the commands of your mother, and assist her in supporting and taking care of your brothers and sisters. Herewith God give you grace—farewell."

His own Christian views and spirit may be recognized in the prayer, written by his own hand, in the Bible he generally read from. After an outline of the Gospel belief, he writes thus:—"O, heavenly Father, grant us an interest in the mediation and atoning sacrifice of thy beloved Son, our heavenly Saviour; remember us in thy kingdom; impart to us that firm faith, ardent love, and exalted hope in thy heavenly name, which are acceptable to Thee; and the remission of sins; and that the remainder of the days Thou hast allotted us to live may be spent in thy fear and love; and when it shall please Thee to remove our spirits from these our bodies of clay, we pray Thee to receive us to thy chosen in thy heavenly kingdom. Amen." I need add no more on this point, except to say that his departure was accordant with his life; and that in calm expectation of the event, in humble trust in his Saviour, surrounded by his near and dear relatives and friends, he bore well his last sickness; and on this day one year ago, and about this very

hour,* sunk tranquilly to rest, aged eighty-six years, eight months and twenty-eight days.

Such, my friends, was his history. The *Traits of his personal character* were also very interesting, and beautifully harmonizing with his life. There are men of delightful temper, spirit and manner, who make themselves felt and understood as the friends of man; the interest they take, awakens our interest in them; their exuberant benevolence pervades all they do, attracting all they meet: it is written on the feature; it looks out from the eye; it is felt in the hand's warm grasp; it bounds forth in the cheerful, welcoming voice; it finds expression in every gesture and motion; the stranger who meets him on the wayside ventures to speak out; the little children take to him playfully and trustfully; and old age recognizes by native instinct and by long experience, the brother and the friend. Such was General Johnson. Fellow-Members! How did our eyes look out at the very first, whenever we assembled, to recognize his venerable form; and drooped disappointed if he were not present. And well we might so feel; for, take him for all in all, we may hardly hope to look upon his like again.

* Nine o'clock in the evening.

He was remarkably active, prompt, decided; never idle; of indefatigable industry. His long uninterrupted healthfulness kept up his activity, his elasticity, and his constitutional cheerfulness; he was kindly to all, very warm-hearted and affectionate; generous in all his instincts, sympathizing with the young. The boy lived on even in his aged heart, and had never died out—a trait of happy wisdom which every son of St. Nicholas should cultivate—in which we should rejoice to imitate our patriarch. He was scrupulous and exact in fulfilling his duties, and attended to his trusts with a peculiarly Holland integrity and fidelity; punctual to the time, and expecting punctuality from others: so memorable indeed for this, that his portrait represents him holding his watch, the forefinger pointing to the minute hand, which had travelled past the even hour of the appointment. Quick-tempered he was, but he bore no resentment; he was ready to be reconciled. If his indignation was aroused, it was at manifest injustice, cruelty, or wrong; and seldom personally, except there were an attempt at imposition or deceit; for frank and above-board himself, he expected and allowed no trickery in others. He commanded to an almost unexampled degree the confidence of the community, and he had no sympathy with anything that

tended at all to impair private or public faith. He was of social, genial mood; he was fond of his pipe, even to the last; and handled it from his seventeenth year to within a quarter of an hour of his death. He was fond of his gun, relishing such active sport even in old age. He was fond of walking, and of manly exercise; from youth up he was an early riser, and he went early to bed. He was temperate and simple in his diet; "one dish" was his general word and practice at his meals. He took pleasure in seeing his friends, was full of conversation, abounded in anecdote, had hopeful views of life, and took interest in passing events and in personal history. His free, easy, unreserved manners, made him ever a welcome and delightful guest. He could give information upon the gravest and most important themes; he could sympathize with the most common. If there was an ancient tree* or stump connected with some memorial of the past, he knew of it, and he was the one to mark it by a monumental stone. If there was any interesting incident, he laid it up in the treasure house of his memory, and brought it out as occasion served. His perception was quick and clear, and his tact admirable; and well nigh to the

* See Strong's History of Flatbush, p. 39.

last "his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated;" and his voice continued full and strong.

All the likenesses taken of him express his venerable, manly, and genial character. As you enter the Governor's Room in the City Hall of Brooklyn, at the side of Washington you behold his portrait, an admirable one, painted by the distinguished William S. Mount, (whose fame posterity will cherish;) and whether there, or in the two portraits, by the same artist, in the possession of the family; or in the beautiful lithograph of D'Avignon, prepared by the order of the American Institute, and to be published in the Volume of its Proceedings for the year 1852, with a memoir of his public and official life and character; or in the daguerreotype of our Stanbery, of whom Brooklyn is so justly proud; or in the exquisite engraving of the bills of the Central Bank of Brooklyn, just issued; or in the bold, rough wood engraving of Orr, prepared for the Brooklyn Freeman newspaper,—in all you may see these traits of a brave, manly, sagacious, efficient, and kindly man, clearly and strikingly expressed.

Of course there was deep sensation at his death. The Union, State, and City Flags were displayed at

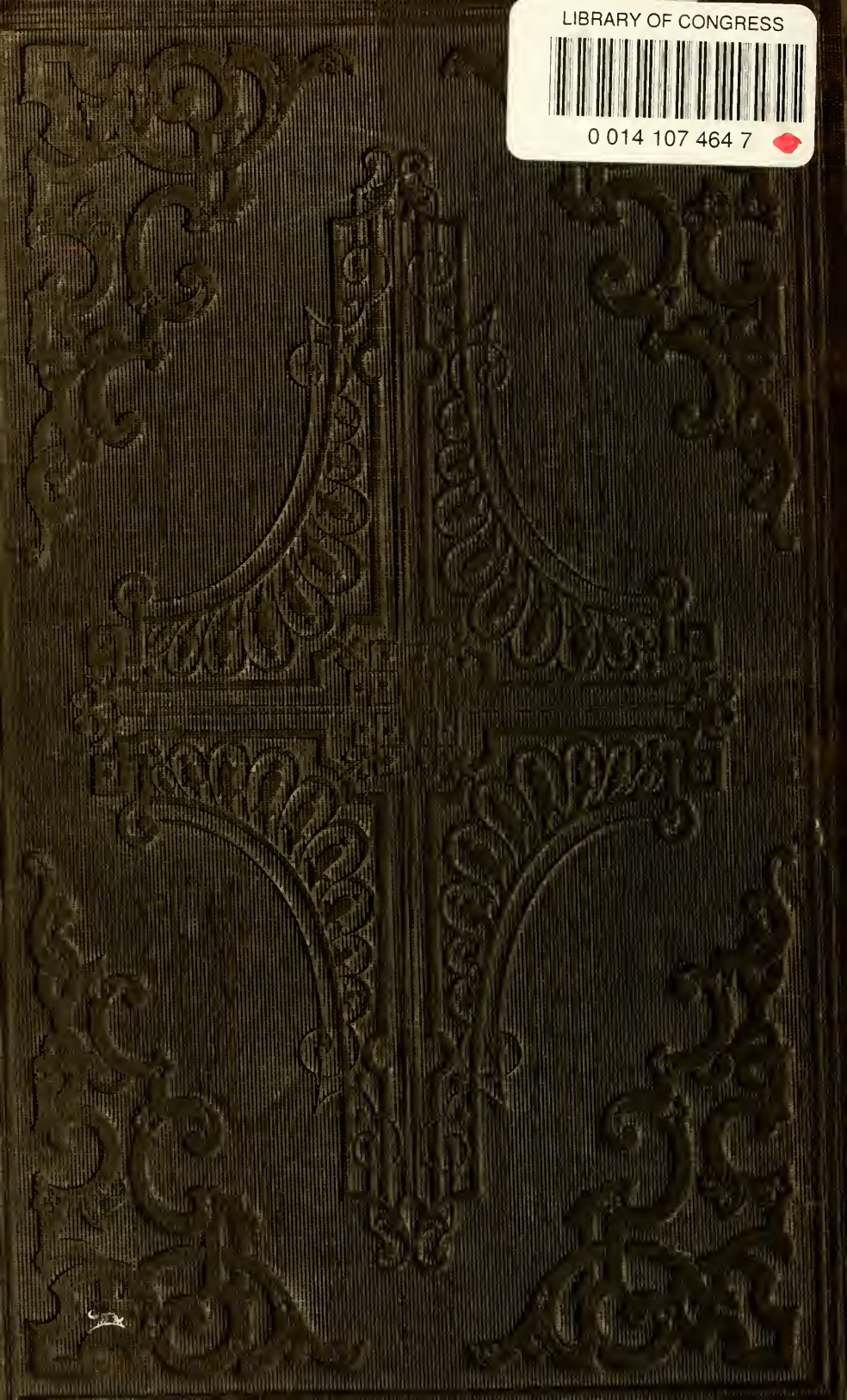
half-mast from the top of the City Hall. The Municipal Authorities, the Military Authorities, the Board of Supervisors, the Social Institutions, the Agricultural Societies, all immediately held special meetings, passed resolutions of condolence and respect, and came as mourners to his burial. All the Press united to do him honor, and each newspaper gave full detail of his private and public life, and recorded its eulogium of his character. Our St. Nicholas Society, you may be sure, was with the foremost in such tribute of honor; as individuals and as a Society we gave expression to our profound regret; eloquent and touching words were spoken; appropriate resolutions were passed; and orders were given to wear the badge of mourning, and attend as a Society at his funeral. Subsequently, at the Annual Meeting, a Special Committee was appointed, consisting of the President (the Hon. J. A. Lott,) and the Vice Presidents of the Society, to procure the delivery of an Address before the members, upon "the Life, Character and Services" of our late lamented President; an office for which I was solicited, and which I accepted at once, as a high honor and privilege, and as a labor of love—a duty which I have thus imperfectly discharged, on this first anniversary of his death.

Fellow-Members: we were present at his funeral, amidst the crowds of our most distinguished citizens. Just previous to his departure he had made particular request, that without civic or military escort, and by his family alone, he should be accompanied to his grave. So in all simplicity our affecting services were rendered. We listened to Holy Scripture read by the Rev. Thomas M. Strong, D. D.; to prayer offered by the Rev. J. Greenleaf; and to an admirable discourse delivered by his Pastor, the Rev. Maurice W. Dwight, D. D.; and he was borne to his grave in our beautiful Greenwood, and buried among his kindred.

Oh, what a memorable Era did he live in! What vast changes did he see in our City, in our Nation, in the World! All the stirring adventures and vast results of the American Revolution, the birth of our glorious Republic and its amazing development and destiny; all the mighty events of the period of the French Revolution, and the splendid career of the First Emperor of France; the growth of the giant Metropolis near us, and of our own Brooklyn, from the mere hamlet to the proud and populous City;—all the wide and wonderful strides which science, art, civilization, and Christian enterprize have taken, renovating the face of the world; accomplishing exploits which never crossed the

imagination of romance, never were suggested by the forecast of philosophy! The grand reality has outstripped all previous thought; the spirit of Discovery has triumphantly invaded all provinces of matter and of mind. Think of the world as in his boyhood; think of it again as at his death: and reason halts, startled; and trembles at the survey of the Past, at the realizing of the Present, at the expectation of the Future.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens, Members of the St. Nicholas Society of Nassau Island, I have done. I have pronounced a Discourse in memory of one who was greatly beloved and prized by us; who was every inch a man; who through long years won universal confidence and regard; whose Period of History was one of most magnificent proportions. Few instances of such fortunate combination; few examples so well balanced and complete; few so well furnished with the best elements of heart, mind, manner, and physical perfection; few living so long amidst such brilliant events and accomplishments of history, can be pointed out. To him will be willingly conceded, even by his Peers, the tribute of being our First President, not only in time, but in honor and position;—and may we not pronounce him Brooklyn's First and Foremost Citizen!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